



**FRIENDLY
AND INCLUSIVE
SPACES AWARDS**



UIA FRIENDLY AND INCLUSIVE SPACES AWARDS 2026

OVERVIEW

Competition Organisers:	International Union of Architects (UIA) Architecture for All (AfA) Work Program Email: awards@uia-architectes.org Submission: https://uia.awardsplatform.com/ . *Participation is free of charge.	
Timeline	Awards launch	10 October 2025
	Deadline for questions	12 November 2025
	Deadline for answers	11 December 2025
	Deadline for submissions	24 February 2026
	Regional Nomination Panels	4 April 2026
	International Jury	5 May 2026
	Announcement of winners	18 May 2026



INTRODUCTION

The UIA recognises that for architecture to truly benefit and reflect society's needs it must be inclusive of and empathetic to all who use it,

Friendly and Inclusive and universal design (also sometimes referred to as accessible design or design for all) aims to remove barriers that create undue effort or segregation and to achieve sustainable buildings and places that are user-friendly, accessible and understandable for everyone.

Organised by the UIA Work Program Architecture for All, the UIA Friendly and Inclusive Spaces Awards were established to encourage and acknowledge architects who have created exemplary friendly, inclusive and accessible buildings and public spaces. Entries must demonstrate that they have met the highest standards of universal and inclusive design, where the completed buildings and places contribute to the quality of life of all those who may use them.

A research award will also be given for evidence-based design research that makes a significant contribution to improved quality of life through facilitating a better understanding of human centred design and its application to the design of the built environment.

AWARD CATEGORIES

1. New Buildings
2. Refurbished Existing Buildings, including Historic Buildings
3. Public and Open Spaces
4. Research

Award winning entries in the 2021-2023 Awards can be seen here:

<https://www.uia-architectes.org/en/news/results-the-2023-uia-friendly-and-inclusive-spaces-awards/>



ELIGIBILITY

Members of the Organiser's team, the jury/boards and their associates, business partners, employees, students and close relatives are not allowed to submit entries. Any person who has been involved in the preparation of the award/prize is not eligible to participate or to assist any participant.

Built works must have been completed since 30th November 2020 and may be submitted by the lead architect of the project or by the building owner/client with the architect's permission. Attribution must be correctly presented and agreed in submission when there are number of architects in a team. Projects that have previously been submitted may be submitted only one additional time.

Research by an architect or architects which advances the theory and practice of friendly and inclusive design must have been completed since 30th November 2020. Projects that have previously been submitted may be submitted only one additional time.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

- **Categories 1, 2 and 3**

Entries will be evaluated on the overall quality of design and how the project has addressed accessibility and inclusive design. In particular, the Jury will consider whether the quality of the architecture:

1. Improves the user experience through use of friendly scale, form, colour, material, light and sensory characteristics
2. Facilitates usability, orientation, navigation, wayfinding, ease of understanding, dignity, respect and safety for all.
3. Exhibits inclusion of the breadth of human diversity. (Submissions should clearly explain and demonstrate the approach and design thinking behind the scheme and how the principles of inclusive design were planned for and integrated.)

- **Category 4**

1. Contributes to improved quality of life through facilitating a better understanding of user centered and inclusive design and its application to the design of the built environment
2. Can be applied widely and used effectively by architects and others to enhance design quality and create friendly and inclusive places



SUBMISSION

Deliverables

For Categories 1,2 and 3

- Access and Inclusion Statement - max. 500 words describing how the project responds to the evaluation criteria. And address the following questions:
 - Question 1: How did you ensure the design process was inclusive of diverse user needs, including those of people with disabilities, older adults, and other marginalized groups
 - Question 2: In what ways does the project go beyond regulatory accessibility requirements to create a truly inclusive and welcoming environment? Which standards did you use?
Question 3: Did you work with accessibility consultants during the design process? If so, how did their contributions influence the outcome?
 - Question 4: If you have user involvement, can you describe how users or community members were involved in the design, development, or evaluation of the project? What impact did their input have?
- Client or User Comments – Max 100 words
- User involvement in the design process is encouraged especially, including people with lived experience.
- Drawings: Site plan, floor plans and cross sections to fully illustrate the project in PDF format only.
- Photographs: Maximum of 15 in jpeg format only, up to 5MB per item
At least three photographs should show the project in context, the remaining should give a comprehensive overview of the project.
Photographs should be labelled – Project name [photo number] photographer name.jpeg
Minimum of two photographs should be identified as your preferred Publicity Shots (PS).
They should be labelled PS – PS Project name [photo number] photographer name.jpeg.

When notified only Medallists and Honourable Mentions are required to submit a 3-minute video for public presentation of their projects.

For Category 4.

- Access and Inclusion Statement - max. 1000 words describing how the project responds to the evaluation criteria.
- Client Comments max 100 words
- User Comments – max 100 words
- Dissemination impact
- Link to the research document



OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

- The official language for the award and submissions is English.

AUTHOR'S RIGHTS

All submitted material shall become the property of the UIA. The author of any entry retains the copyright and the author's rights of the submitted work. Award participants must guarantee being the authors of the submitted project/work and not infringing intellectual property rights of third parties.

Publication rights: Participants give the right to the UIA and the Architecture for All Work Programme and Member Sections to publish the submitted material (images, illustrations, photos etc.) of the entries for the purpose of promoting the award, its aims and for research. The UIA may publish the entries on its website, in exhibitions, press releases, social media, publications and other communications. The names of the authors will be mentioned. Award winners agree to mention the UIA Friendly and Inclusive Spaces Award whenever possible when presenting their project in the future.

AWARD PROCESS

For Categories 1 – 3

The nomination and evaluation process will be carried out in two (2) phases.

Nomination phase:

- Regional Nomination Panels, comprising members of the UIA Architecture for All Work Programme will evaluate the entries and make recommendations to the main international jury.
- The Regional Nomination Panels may be asked to review projects from regions other than their own.

Awarding phase:

- Recommended projects will be evaluated by an International Jury chaired by the UIA Honorary President.
- Nominated projects will be further evaluated by the International Jury who will vote for a global medal winner and Honourable Mentions in each Category.



NOMINATION PHASE | REGIONAL NOMINATION PANELS

Region I - Western Europe

1. **Ar. Kathleen Polders (Chair)**, AfA Region I Director, Belgium.
Belgian architect and service coordinator at Inter, the Flemish Centre for expertise in accessibility and inclusive design. Belgium's national expert for AccessibleEU
2. **Ar. Delfin Jimenez**, AfA Region I Deputy Director, Spain.
PhD in Architecture from the UPM (Madrid, Spain). He is President of ASEPAU (Spanish Association of Universal Accessibility Professionals) and the AccessibleEU delegate in Spain.
3. **Ar. Susana Machado**, AfA Member, Portugal.
A trainer and lecturer on the subject of 'Accessibility'. Works for the Portuguese Architects' Association coordinator of the Technical Commission for Accessibility (2021-2023, 2025),
4. **Ar. Kate McGechen**, AfA Member, UK.
Director of Inclusive Design at Jacobs, Awarded RIBA's South-East Architect of the Year (2021) and led a project winning the Selwyn Goldsmith Award for Universal Design
5. **Ar. Helene Reinhardt**, AfA Member, France.
Specialist in inclusive, sustainable, and feminist approaches. Recipient of the 2023 UIA Friendly & Inclusive Design Award. Venice Biennale (for France 2016) UIA F&I Spaces (2023).
6. **Ar. Fionnuala Rogerson** (Alternate), AfA Advisor, Ireland.
Previous co-director of UIA Architecture for All WP, member UIA Sustainability Commission, RIAI Universal Design and International Affairs Committees. Ireland

Region II - Central and Eastern Europe and the Middle East

1. **Ar. Sotiris Papadopoulos (Chair)**, AfA Region II Deputy Director, Greece.
Specializing in inclusive design, 15 competition awards and involvement in 6 European Commission Research Programmes. delegate for the Association of Greek Architects to the Architects' Council of Europe (ACE), from 1993 to 2010. Multiple times as a juror for the UIA's "Architecture for All" awards
2. **Ar. Iris Popescu**, AfA Region II Regional Director, Romania.



specialized in inclusive design and accessibility, founder of AMAIS, , URBACT Ad-hoc Expert and she published the first inclusive design guide in Romania Works at the intersection of design, research, and activism.

3. **Andreas Lampropoulos**, previous winner, Greece.
Expert in urban planning, inclusive design, and sustainability, multi-awards including Karpenisi town center rehabilitation (2017 UIA Congress). Respected lecturer and author.
4. **Katerina Pappmichail**, Greece.
A leader in universal design and accessible tourism, having founded the European Network for Accessible Tourism (ENAT) and served as a national expert for AccessibleEU.
5. **Ar.Oana Mihaescu**, Romania.
Lecturer at "Ion Mincu" University, Ph.D. on sustainable schools, leads innovation in sustainable design as president of PRISPA Association and co-authored Romania's accessibility norm NP 051-201
6. **Ar. Marily Griva** (Alternate), Greece.
PhD in architectural heritage accessibility promotes inclusive design. Vice Presi of Greek Accessibility Committee, champions the rights of people with disabilities in architecture and heritage

Region III - The Americas

1. **Ar. Kristine France (Chair)**, AfA Member, Chile.
Architect 20+ years in universal accessibility, leading projects, studies, and standards. Led the creation of Chile's National Universal Accessibility Council; directs "Architecture and Universal Accessibility" postgraduate program at PUC Chile
2. **Ar. Cecilia Leiva Muñoz**, AfA Region III Regional Director, Chile.
Received the 2023 Alberto Risopatrón Award for her contributions to architecture. Led publications on affordable housing and inclusive design for disasters, Universal Accessibility Consultant in heritage, education, health, and public spaces. Presented internationally.
3. **Ar. Ron Wickman**, AfA Member, Canada.
Activist based in Edmonton, specializes in disability-inclusive design and affordable, adaptable housing. Authored books and articles on accessibility and contributes to urban planning discussions.



4. **Ar. Teresita Amarillo**, AfA Member, Uruguay.
Coordinator of the Accessibility Committee at the Society of Architects of Uruguay, Technical Secretary of UNIT's Accessibility Committee, and leader of accessibility training at the Uruguayan Institute of Technical Standards
5. **Ar. Josefina Ocampo**, AfA Member, Argentina.
Coordinator of the Accessibility Committee at the Society of Architects of Uruguay, Technical Secretary of UNIT's Accessibility Committee, and leader of accessibility training at the Uruguayan Institute of Technical Standards. Phd Candiate
6. **Ar. Sandra Esparza (Alternate)**, AfA Member, Ecuador.
Urban planner, specializes in universal accessibility and urban wellbeing. Advises municipalities, designed Ecuador's first inclusive park, President Fundación Ecuatoriana Accessible. author of Un Parque para Todos

Region IV - Asia and Oceania

1. **Ar. Glory Wang (Chair)**, AfA Region IV Deputy Director, Hong Kong.
MD Atelier Pacific Ltd Hong Kong, leads innovative, context-sensitive projects, combining expertise in architecture, design research, and interior architecture to create impactful context sensitive built environments.
2. **Ar. Norwina Mohd**, AfA Region IV Regional Director, Malaysia.
- Architecture for All and UIA-Public Health Group ARCASIA Community for Social Responsibility (ACSR) and former chair and current member of PAM Social Community and Responsibility Committee.
3. **Ar. Belinda Seale**, AfA Member, Australia.
Access consultant with 25+ years of experience, is the founder of Haptic Space. specializes in universal and therapeutic design -pursuing a PhD in nature-based design for rehabilitation.
4. **Ar. Belinda Goh**, AfA Member, Australia.
Senior project leader at Populous, led award-winning projects like the London 2012 Olympic Stadium and ICC Sydney. She also advocates for gender equity, sustainability, and mentorship
5. **Ar. Erico Abordo**, AfA Member, Philippines.
Architect and accessibility consultant trained by UN institutions. Combines practice, advocacy, and lecturing, contributing to UIA AfA and global forums. PHILIPPINES



6. **Ar. Fariah Sharmeen Akaba (Alternate)**, AfA Member, Bangladesh.
Principal at Arquitectura Pvt. Ltd., with over 50 projects. Secretary General of FACE, promoting equity, sustainability, and inclusive design

Region V - Africa

1. **Ar. Samer Helmy (Chair)**, AfA Region V Deputy Director, Egypt.
Founder of SEDS (Sustainable Environmental Design Solutions), specializes in inclusive design, urban planning, and heritage conservation, collaborating with UNESCO and UNDP
2. **Ar. Dr Sherine Wahba**, AfA Member, Egypt.
Head of the Architecture Engineering Department, Faculty of Engineering Cairo University, and Deputy of Engineering Sector Head in the Supreme Council of Universities in Egypt. An academic, a researcher, a practicing architect for more than 30 years now and a member of the UNESCO-UIA Validation Council "Education Commission" & "Architecture for All" work programme.
3. **Ar. Safaa Issa**, AfA Member, Egypt.
An esteemed Egyptian architect and professor at Menofia University, PhD from Cairo University and conducted Fulbright research. Renowned for her expertise in housing and sustainable cities, and a keynote speaker.
4. **Ar. Daryl Venpin**, AfA Member, Mauritius.
Director of Madwerks Architects and founder of Studio Venpin. Specialist in tropical and sustainable architecture, active in international dialogues.
5. **Ar. Issam Damerddji**, AfA Member, Algeria.
Founder of EURL Handicacess, expert in accessibility and universal design. Collaborates with Handicap International and lectures on inclusive architecture
6. **Ar. Daughter Lesego (Alternate)**, AfA Member, Botswana.
Architect and co-founder of BOWICO (Botswana Women in Construction), holds a Master's in Project Management, graduating as valedictorian, and teaches at the University of Botswana



JURY

International Jury for the Awarding Phase | Category 1, 2, 3

1. **Ar. Vassilis Sgoutas (Chair)**, Honorary President UIA, Greece.
Former UIA President (1999–2002), widely awarded for major projects in Greece and the Middle East. Namesake of the UIA Prize for Social Responsibility
2. **Ar. Vanessa Zadel**, UIA representative, Co-Director AfA, Peru
Specializing in inclusive design and accessibility, Secretary of Peru's National Commission on Accessibility, Professor and Academic Secretary of the Architecture School at Universidad de Lima. Founder of MOZ Studio
3. **Ar. Alanah Honey**, RIBA, UK
Past Winner of UIA F&I Spaces 2023, Senior architect at Caroe Architecture, known for her leadership on landmark heritage-accessibility projects such as the award-winning Equal Access transformation at St Paul's Cathedral.
4. **Valerie Fletcher**, Boston Institute for Human Centred Design, USA
Executive Director of IHCD, leads inclusive design initiatives and neuroscience-based research. Harvard Master's, ethics and Public Policy, serves on IAUD and Boston Architectural College boards. named Inclusive Design Champion 2022
5. **Ar. Olanrewaju Olusola**, AfA Region V Regional Director, Nigeria.
Founder of Creation Consult, specializes in architecture, urban design, and sustainable practices. President of AIA Sub-Saharan Africa, received the NANN Excellence Award in 2025 as *"Icon of Societal Development."*
6. **Ar. Eduardo Schmunis (Alternate)**, UIA representative, AfA Member, Argentina.
Specialist in Universal Accessibility and Gerontology, collaborated on Argentina's Long-Term Care Facility Regulations (RLE PM). Eduardo is an author and international educator on accessibility for older persons.



International Jury | Research | Category 4

1. **Ar. Allen Kong (Chair)**, UIA representative, Co-Director AfA, Australia.
Projects have received numerous international awards, including prestigious UN Scrolls of Honour 2011, and in 2024 recognizing his exceptional contributions to the design of human settlements.
2. **Ar. Tom Grey**, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland.
Specializing in inclusive, sustainable urban design, has led research since 2009 at Trinity College Dublin on people-friendly, age-attuned urban spaces. His work emphasizes Universal Design, accessibility, and developing climate-responsive communities for people of all abilities and ages
3. **John Zeisel**, I'm still here Foundation, USA.
Sociologist, Author Inquiry by Design; I 'm Still Here; Sociology and Architectural Design. Neuroscience in Architecture; President and Founder of Hearthstone TBC
4. **Ar. Jasmien Herssens**, Belgium.
Belgian architect and educator at Hasselt University, leads multisensory design research for people born blind. Founder of Fourmind, she also serves as Vice President of Design for All Europe.
5. **Ar. Isabella Steffan**, AfA Member, Italy.
Certified Professional Ergonomist, expert in Design for All and usability. IEA Fellow and CNAPPC representative at UIA Region I. ITALY
6. **Ar. Arina Hayati** (Alternate), UIA representative, AfA Member, Indonesia
Lecturer, at ITS Surabaya specializes in inclusive design and universal accessibility. Drawing from personal experience, she leads research at ITS and advocates for disability-inclusive, age-friendly design.

JURY DECISIONS

- The jury awards shall be final and sovereign; decisions of the jury are not subject to reconsideration by the Organisers, in whole or in part, and binding on all parties concerned and decisions cannot be appealed against.
- Winners will be notified of the Competition results directly.
- A list of awarded projects will be posted on the UIA website and promoted to media outlets.



EXHIBITION AND PROMOTION

- The Organisers have the right to publicise entries and naming the authors.
- All winning and commended projects will be displayed at the 2026 Congress, promoted through publication on the UIA and Architecture for All Work Programme websites, social media and/or journals as well as those of UIA member bodies. Press releases publicising the winners will also be sent to international media.
- Winners will be required to submit a 3-minute videos of their winning Project.

AWARDS

- The Jury may award a Medal to the Global Winners in each of the 4 Categories, together with up to 3 Honourable Mentions in each Category.
- There are no winners at regional level.
- The Jury will publish a jury-report of its deliberations concerning the commended entries and the winners in each category and reserves the right not to make any award if, in its opinion, no entry reaches the required standards.

AWARD CEREMONY

- Global Medal Winners will be invited to present their project in person at a seminar organised by the Architecture for All Work Programme at the UIA Barcelona World Congress.
- Date 28/06/2026 - 02/07/2026.
- Registration fee, accommodation and travel cost for one representative of each category winner, will be provided by the UIA AFA Work Programme.
- Friendly and Inclusive Spaces Awards medals and certificates will be presented at the Barcelona UIA Congress.